

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 00924 01 OF 02 280842Z
ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 EA-06 ISO-00 AID-01 SS-15 NSC-06
/040 W

-----124118 280902Z /21

P R 280800Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9535
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC HONO HI
JCRC BARBERS PT HI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 924

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OREP
SUBJECT: CODEL MONTGOMERY-MEETING WITH LAO ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER

SUMMARY: CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY EXPLAINED THE CODEL'S
INTEREST IN MIA'S AND RELATIONS IN GENERAL. ACTING
FOREIGN MINISTER KHAMPHAY OUTLINED THE DIFFICULTIES IN
SEARCHING FOR MIA REMAINS. NEVERTHELESS, FOUR SETS
HAD BEEN FOUND. THEY WOULD BE GIVEN TO THE CODEL.
FEW DETAILS WERE AVAILABLE ON THE CRASH SITES. KHAMPHAY
ADMITTED THE REMAINS HAD BEEN FOUND AT THE BEGINNING OF
1978. KHAMPHAY MADE A GENERAL APPEAL FOR U.S. AID TO
THE LPDR BUT SUBMITTED NO SPECIFIC REQUESTS. END
SUMMARY.

1. THE SUBSTANTIVE ELEMENT OF CODEL MONTGOMERY
(MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, MR. VANCE, LT.COL. EILAND,
AND MISS LARSON) PLUS THE CHARGE MET AT 1500 AUGUST 25
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PAGE 02 VIENTI 00924 01 OF 02 280842Z

WITH A GROUP FROM THE LAO FOREIGN MINISTRY HEADED
BY ACTING MINISTER KHAMPHAY BOUPHA, ACTING UNDER
SECRETARY SOUKTHAVONE KEOLA, AND DEPARTMENT TWO
DIRECTOR SOMBAT CHOUNLAMANY. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED
IN ENGLISH AND LAO WITH EACH SIDE PROVIDING AN
INTERPRETER INTO ITS OWN LANGUAGE.

2. CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY OPENED BY EXPLAINING THAT HIS DELEGATION HAD A SPECIFIC INTEREST IN MIA'S BUT ALSO A GENERAL INTEREST IN U.S.-LAO RELATIONS. HE SAID THAT THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT HAD SET UP AN MIA SEARCH ORGANIZATION WHICH HAD HAD SOME SUCCESS. HE REQUESTED THAT THE LPDR HELP IN SEEKING U.S. REMAINS IN LAOS. HE SAID THAT THE DELEGATION HAD BROUGHT SOME CASE DOSSIERS WITH THEM.

3. CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY SAID THAT THE VIETNAMESE HAD TOLD HIS GROUP THAT THE SRV WOULD BE WILLING TO ASSIST THE LAO IF THE LAO SHOULD ASK THEM FOR HELP IN LOOKING FOR MIA REMAINS. HE SAID THAT THE KNEW THAT THERE HAD BEEN MANY LAO LOST IN THE WAR AS WELL AS AMERICANS. HE CLOSED BY SAYING THAT HIS DELEGATION HAD COME IN FRIENDSHIP AND HAD STATED ITS CASE.

4. MINISTER KHAMPHAY THANKED THE DELEGATION FOR COMING TO LAOS AND THANKED THE CHAIRMAN FOR HIS KIND WORDS. KHAMPNAY THEN DESCRIBED THE PROBLEMS THE LAO HAD IN SEARCHING FOR MIA REMAINS. LAOS WAS A LARGE COUNTRY WITH VERY LITTLE POPULATION. MANY AREAS WERE WILD, RUGGED, AND COMPLETELY UNPOPULATED. THE FORESTS WERE INHABITED BY FLESH-EATING ANIMALS. THERE WAS MUCH UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE AROUND LEFT OVER FROM THE WAR. INSURGENTS WERE A DANGER IN MAY PARTS OF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 VIENTI 00924 01 OF 02 280842Z

COUNTRY.

5. NEVERTHELESS, MINISTER KHAMPHAY SAID, ORDERS HAD BEEN SENT OUT FROM THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO LOCAL OFFICIALS THAT SEARCHES FOR U.S. MIA REMAINS SHOULD BE MADE. THESE SEARCHES HAD BEEN AND WERE TAKING PLACE. THERE HAD BEEN SOME SUCCESS. THREE CRASH SITES HAD BEEN FOUND AND FOUR SETS OF REMAINS HAD BEEN UNCOVERED.

6. KHAMPHAY SAID HE WAS SORRY TO SAY THAT THE FOUR SETS OF REMAINS HAD BEEN ALL MIXED TOGETHER IN ONE BOX. CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY SAID THAT THIS DID NOT MATTER. THE CENTRAL IDENTIFICATION LABORATORY IN HAWAII HAD HIGHLY TRAINED EXPERTS WHO COULD MAKE POSITIVE IDENTIFICATIONS. HE ASKED IF THE REMAINS COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE DELEGATION. MINISTER KHAMPHAY SAID THAT THEY COULD BE TURNED OVER AT 0800, SATURDAY, AUGUST 26. CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY EXPRESSED THE DELEGATIONS'S DEEP APPRECIATION FOR THIS ACTION BY THE LAO GOVERNMENT.

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 00924 02 OF 02 280846Z
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P R 280800Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9536
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENTIANE 924

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

7. CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY ASKED IF THERE WERE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS ON THE THREE CRASHES. KHAMPHAY EXPLAINED THAT THE INFORMATION WAS INEXACT, BUT SOME DATA WAS AVAILABLE. CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY EXPRESSED THE GROUP'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING DETAILS. ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE LAO SIDE THEN READ OUT THE CRASHED AIRCRAFT TYPES (AD-6, F-105, AND F111A) AND CRASH LOCATIONS (ALL IN SAM NEUA PROVINCE). APPROXIMATE DATES WERE PROVIDED. (COMMENT: ALL THIS INFORMATION WAS GIVEN IN WRITING TO THE JCRC REPRESENTATIVES WHO CAME AUGUST 26 IN THE SPECIAL C-141. JCRC HAS SAID IT WOULD PROVIDE THE EMBASSY WITH COMPLETE DATA FOR PASSAGE TO THE LAO FROM ITS RECORDS AFTER IDENTIFICATION OF THE REMAINS IS MADE.

8. CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY SAID HE THOUGHT THE AD-6 CRASH MIGHT BE THE SUBJECT OF ONE OF THE DOSSIERS THE GROUP HAD BEEN GOING TO HAND OVER. HE SAID THAT THE DELEGATION WOULD PASS ON WORD OF THE SUCCESSFUL LAO EFFORTS.

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PAGE 02 VIENTI 00924 02 OF 02 280846Z

TION WOULD PASS ON WORD OF THE SUCCESSFUL LAO EFFORTS.

HE APPRECIATED THEM VERY MUCH. HE THEN REPEATED THE VIETNAMESE OFFER OF SEARCH HELP TO THE LAO.

9. CONGRESSMAN MOORE SAID THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST MIA INFORMATION THAT HAD BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE LAO. THE DELEGATION GREATLY APPRECIATED THIS BREAKTHROUGH. HE ASKED WHEN THE REMAINS HAD BEEN FOUND. KHAMPHAY SAID IT HAD BEEN "AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR."

10. KHAMPHAY SAID THAT THE LAO HAD A GREAT NEED FOR AID IN REPAIRING THE DAMAGE DONE DURING THE WAR. CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY SAID THAT HIS GROUP WAS NOT HERE TO NEGOTIATE BUT IT COULD LISTEN. KHAMPHAY SAID THAT THAT WAS ALL HE HAD TO SAY.

11. TEN DOSSIERS INVOLVING 22 MIA WERE THEN PASSED TO THE LAO SIDE OF THE TABLE. CONGRESSMAN MOORE FOLLOWED WITH A SPECIAL APPEAL IN CONNECTION WITH THE LAST CRASH OF THE WAR, A DC-3 WHICH HAD GONE DOWN IN THE EXTREME SOUTHEASTERN PART OF LAOS. HE SAID THAT SEVERAL OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN SEEN TO PARACHUTE SAFELY FROM THE PLANE HAD BEEN SEEN TO BE ALIVE ON THE GROUND AND HAD BEEN SEEN TO BE CAPTURED AND MOVED BY LOCAL FORCES. CONGRESSMAN MOORE ASKED FOR ANY INFORMATION ON THESE PEOPLE. THE FAMILY OF ONE OF THEM LIVED IN HIS DISTRICT.

12. CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY CLOSED THE MEETING BY AGAIN THANKING ACTING MINISTER KHAMPHAY AND CONFIRMING THAT THE GROUP WOULD RETURN THE NEXT MORNING TO VIEW AND RECEIVED THE FOUR SETS OF REMAINS.

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PAGE 03 VIENTI 00924 02 OF 02 280846Z

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Message Attributes

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